

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0606

January 23, 2018

2443 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-7882
(202) 226-4623 FAX

DISTRICT OFFICE:
3300 SOUTH PARKER ROAD
CHERRY CREEK PLACE IV; SUITE 305
AURORA, CO 80014
(720) 748-7514
(720) 748-7680 FAX

COFFMAN.HOUSE.GOV

Honorable Judge Silvia Fernandez de Gurmendi
President of the International Criminal Court
Oude Waalsdorperweg 10
2597 AK, The Hague
The Netherlands

The Honorable Judge Fernandez de Gurmendi,

I am deeply concerned by the well documented human rights violations and abuses committed by Nicolas Maduro, head of the narco-dictatorship of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. Given the widely reported recent and past human rights violations committed in his name, I am requesting that the International Criminal Court (ICC) open a full investigation into the allegations against Nicolas Maduro, and his top aides, for a charge of crimes against humanity. It is clear that at this time, political opponents of the Maduro regime are not afforded the basic human right of due process, instead they are killed in the streets protesting and murdered while attempting to peacefully surrender.

The most notable recent example of the Maduro regime's disregard for human rights is the Venezuelan dictatorship's extra-judicial killing of Oscar Perez and several of his colleagues. On January 15, Venezuelan special forces launched a deadly attack on Perez using excessive force including rocket launchers and assault rifles with orders, as reported, to "not take anyone alive." The attack against the government opponents left Oscar Perez and six others dead. Oscar Perez and those with him were killed despite their clear efforts to negotiate a peaceful surrender. The videos of this event show Oscar Perez asking for a peaceful surrender and to spare the lives of the civilians in the house. The government forces disregard for this simple request is haunting, and the excessive use of force against the individuals who were attempting to surrender peacefully is deeply disturbing. I also believe it constitutes a crime against humanity.

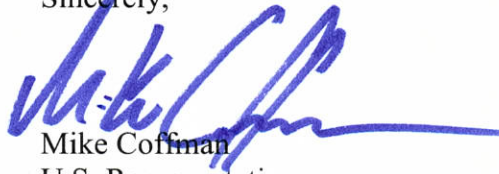
In addition to this extra judicial murder of Oscar Perez, the Maduro regime systematically and violently oppresses peaceful protests conducted by its citizens. According to the 2016 State Department's annual human rights report, security forces in Venezuela committed an estimated 1,396 extrajudicial killings in 2015, while a report by the United Nations (UN) human rights office in August 30, 2017, found the majority of the protesters' deaths were linked to security forces and pro-Government armed groups. Additionally, the UN report documented that "more than 5,000 people were detained since 1 April, with more than 1,000 reportedly still held as of 31 July [2017]." As more reports surface, the extent of the Maduro regime's crimes against humanity continue to grow.

Nicolas Maduro and his allies have no intention of changing their current policies that disregard the human rights of Venezuelans. It is time for the ICC to hold the murderous Maduro regime in Venezuela accountable for its actions against its own citizens.

There is abundant information and evidence of extensive and systematic human rights abuses, and I urge you to take these violations seriously and prosecute the Maduro regime for its human rights abuses against the citizens of Venezuela.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mike Coffman", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mike Coffman
U.S. Representative
Colorado's 6th District

CC: U.S. Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson
U.S. – U.N. Ambassador, Nikki Haley
OAS Secretary General, Luis Almagro